

Bemidji Area OEHE Network:



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ANNUAL OEHE WORKSHOP

The dates for the annual workshop have tentatively been set for March 26-28th at the DoubleTree Mall of America in Bloomington, MN. Agenda items are presently being sought. Topics or speakers of interest to staff must be requested early so the Branch Chiefs can make arrangements. Topics mentioned thus far for the EHSS side of the house include:

Bio-terrorism
Emergency Preparedness
Mold contamination
Accreditation Issues
HAACP- Food Safety Tng.
Food Service Tour
NFPA refresher

It is hoped that some joint sessions for two or more branches can be arranged for this year's workshop. Please submit your ideas.

INJURY PREVENTION FELLOWSHIP

For those individuals interested in taking part in the IHS Injury Prevention Fellowship Program please contact Diana Kuklinski ASAP. The Fellowship is open to those individuals working in the area of injury prevention (including State IP staff with whom we collaborate) that wish to further develop their skills. The fellowship is an excellent opportunity for individuals to learn those skills necessary to develop or implement community injury prevention projects. The requirements are:

1. Taking part in the Introduction to IP Course
2. Taking part in the Level II course Data Collection and Interpretation (or equivalent)
3. Having a Bachelors degree
4. Having 3 years experience in public health

5. Having 2 years experience in community or clinic-based injury prevention

Letters of support for one's involvement in the fellowship are required as well.

PERSONNEL

The Bemidji Area has selected a new Director of the Office of Environmental Health and Engineering. Mr. Louis Erdrich reported to the Bemidji Area Office on September 24th. He previously served as the Facility Engineer at the Red Lake Service Unit. Louis is a welcome addition to the BAIHS team and brings a wealth of experience in both the sanitation facilities construction and facility management areas.

In addition, we now have a fall COSTEP in the person of Carla Britton. She is assigned to the Lac Courte Oreilles tribe and is supervised by Richard Reese, the NNAHA Tribal EH Officer. Carla will be working primarily on injury prevention program data collection.

NATIONAL THREAT

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has received information giving reason to believe that additional terrorist activity may occur both within the U.S. and overseas. Everyone is encouraged to be on highest alert and report any suspicious activity to the FBI.

The Environmental Protection Agency is also concerned that the nation's drinking water supply is susceptible to attack. A Water Protection Task Force has been assembled to assist federal, state, local and tribal partners in safeguarding water supply systems. System vulnerability assessment training is being arranged by Sandia Labs and is to be available by satellite downlink and will be broadcast three times in the coming months. More information on training will be forthcoming as it is developed.

There has been some concern about recent mailings from postal facilities that have tested positive for anthrax.

The possibility of second-hand infection from letters that have come in contact with an infected site is considered, by DHHS, to be extremely small. Since Nov. 1st no Indian Health Service mail is being handled by mail rooms that are suspect. For current information on bio-terrorism, CDC has a website at: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov>

PROMOTIONS

We are now in another promotion cycle. All officers up for promotion this year should make an effort to make sure their personnel files (OPF) in Headquarters are in order. To check on what is in your official file you may visit the DCP website at: <http://dcp.psc.gov> will need to enter their user ID and password that was assigned previously. The agency ranking tools should be prepared this month as well and submitted to your respective Branch Chiefs. Officers are also encouraged to review the article on promotions in the Sept. 2001 Commissioned Corps Bulletin and determine if all pertinent information has been sent to the proper officials for inclusion in their Official Personnel File.

DISTRICT EH OFFICERS MEET

Tribal and IHS environmental health officers met at two separate district meetings in Ashland, WI and in Bemidji, MN. The annual meetings, coordinated by the District EH Officers, served to assist all field EH personnel in planning and priority setting for the new fiscal year. Of primary concern were the issues of updating facility listings for the determination of tribal shares of the Area EHSS workload and discussing general program needs.

One issue of concern brought up at the Rhinelander District's meeting in Ashland was the need to form a workgroup to compile information on bio-terrorism and emergency preparedness issues. Stewart Watson presented a power point presentation on Anthrax, which will be made available to all EH Officers.

THIRD PARTY CLAIMS

Should a government employee be involved in a motor vehicle crash involving a third party and there is property damage to the third party, a claim against the government may be made. For a third party to recover the cost of damages the following must be compiled and submitted:

SF 95 Claim for Damages

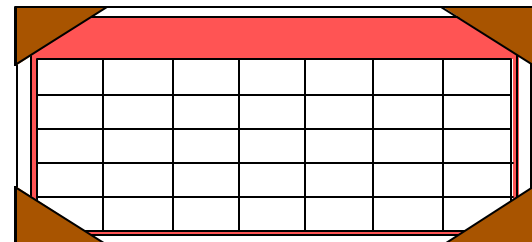
Crash reports
Police report
Two estimates
Insurance Company Information

Upon receipt of these items the Area Safety Officer will send them via Aberdeen Property Mgt. to the PHS Claims Officer in Rockville, MD. All decisions as to settlement of claims are made by the Claims Officer.

WEBSITES

Environmental Health Officers now have three new websites to access for information. The Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC) is located at: <http://www.ehopac.org/> Also, to the Division of Environmental Health in the Indian Health Service has its own site at: <http://www.dehs.ihs.gov/> The Environmental Health Support Center sponsors training courses throughout the year for OEHE and Tribal staff. The EHSC website can be accessed to see what training is coming up at: www2.ihs.gov/opheng/index.asp

CALENDAR



Nov.- 27th, Cass Lake Hosp. JCAHO Focus Survey

Dec.- 6th, DEH Conf. Call

Jan.- 14th Branch Chiefs' Meeting in Oklahoma City along with EIS tng.